[Chaco Period]

A church wedding is usually followed by a party in which both relatives and friends participate. After being married the young couple go to live with the bride's parents, although this rule is no longer adhered to strictly. 177 585 [591]

BURIAL

When an adult person died, old people gathered at the house of the dead. Young people were not permitted to view or come near the corpse, as it was believed this could bring death to the young. Around the corpse the people placed all his belongings, clothes, tools, weapons, and ornaments. If anything were missing the ghost would return to claim his property. 761 764 [775]

After lamentations at the house, the corpse was wrapped in his or her clothes and carried to the cemetery some distance from the village; the corpse was placed in a grave on his back with the feet facing the west. This was done in order that the ghost, when freed from the body, could go to the Chaco. On the way to the graveyard a shaman would walk in front of the procession and as he reached the graveyard he would tell the other ghosts about whom they were going to receive. After the body was buried the shaman would be the last to leave the cemetery, his duty being to prevent the ghost from returning to the village. 764 [756]

After returning to the village, the relatives often burnt the house in which a deceased adult had lived. Sometimes, however, they were satisfied by changing the doorway of the house. The name of the dead person could not be uttered for several months. Members of the dead person's family would change their names. All this was done in order to confuse the ghost and to prevent it from returning to the living relatives. It was believed that if the ghost came back it would take a living relative back to the land of the dead. 768 [551]

The close female relatives of a dead man would remove their clothing and cut their hair as a sign of mourning. For a month after death they would wail at sunrise and sunset, sitting naked in their houses. The wife or mother of a dead man was supposed to show even more explicit signs of mourning. The widow, for instance, was not permitted to work or to bathe for many days. In addition, there were regulations which restricted freedom of widows and widowers. A widower was permitted to marry only a widow. If a man had 765 [587]

is given. All Terena children are welcome at the Protestant school irrespective of the religious faith of their parents. Children receive medical attention if they are ill and report their illness to the missionaries. Boys and girls attend school together, the teachers insisting that each child be dressed in clean clothing. Outside of being kept in after school, there is no other form of punishment.

The official Government school has an attendance of about 37 students. The wife of the manager of the Post acts as a teacher, with a Brazilian girl as an assistant. The curriculum is the same as at the Protestant school. The Terena prefer to send their children to the Protestant school because they believe they learn more and will finish the 4-year course of instruction. Pupils tend to leave the Government school as soon as they are able to read and write a little. The Protestant school also gives prizes to good students, consisting of articles of clothing and books.

The Protestant missionaries have established schools in all the larger Terena villages. At Ipegue there is a school with 80 pupils and at Moreira a school with 50 pupils. The missionaries say that Terena children are industrious and learn rather quickly. Yet, they say that no Terena student has gone beyond the 4 years, even when they have an opportunity in some of the neighboring towns. Even at that, the present status of education among the Terena compares well with the prevalent illiteracy in the rural areas of Brazil.

RELIGION

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The old Terena believed in a "High God," *Itukovioke*, in the culture hero twins, *Yúrikoyuvakái*, and in such evil spirits as *Vanónu*, *Voropí*, and *Hihíaiuné*. Insofar as all things were believed to have a soul the Terena can be said to have believed in animism. Magic was based on the belief that certain plants, animals, and inanimate objects possessed powers which could be used to bring about good or evil results. Shamanism was highly developed and the spirits of dead shamans were used by living shamans to influence the affairs of men. Ghosts of the dead were feared, as they were believed to cause death if permitted

to return to the village or otherwise get into contact with the living.

Beyond serving as a means for accounting for the existence of the world, the "High God," *Itukoviche*, was not significant. It may even turn out that the belief in a "High God" is due to Christian influence. There appear to be no myths or rituals connected with *Itukoviche*. The really important supernatural beings were the twin culture heroes, *Yúrikoyuvakái*. By reference to these twins the Terena explain their origin and the origin of agriculture, fire, and other elements of their culture. The Terena have a number of myths about the origin and exploits of the twin culture heroes. One version expresses the origin of *Yúrikoyuvakái* as follows:

In the beginning *Yúrikoyuvakái* was just one being. He lived with his sister *Lévéchechevéna*. When his sister planted a garden, *Yúrikoyuvakái* stole the fruits. *Lévéchechevéna* then became very angry and cut *Yúrikoyuvakái* in two, both halves later growing into the twins.

Another version states that the twins originated from a centipede:

Yúrikoyuvakái was a centipede who lived with his mother. He made his mother very angry because he wanted to follow her into the fields every day. One day she became so angry that she cut him in two. The two halves grew up into twins.

The Terena claim that everything they possessed in the past was received from the twin culture heroes. One myth expresses the origin of the Terena as follows:

In the beginning there were the twins *Yúrikoyuvakái*. They both had the same name. They used to walk around the world setting traps to catch birds. One morning they did not find a bird in the trap but only the remains of a bird. As some one was stealing their birds the twins decided to set a watch over the trap. They ordered the lizard to watch the trap. But the lizard was lazy and careless and did not see who was stealing the birds. When the twins saw that the trap was empty, they questioned the lizard who could not answer. The twins then became very angry and threw the lizard against a tree, and that is why lizards live in trees even today. The twins then ordered a little bird, "bemtevi," to watch the trap. Next morning the twins found the trap empty and when they questioned "bemtevi" about who had stolen the bird, he flew up and down over a bunch of grass and chirped, "This is the door to the place from where the people came who robbed your trap." Then the twins pulled out the bunch of grass and found a door, and when they opened the door, they found a hole in the ground full of Indians.

The twins ordered the Indians to come out. They all came out, not one remaining in the hole. The Indians

bringing harm to the Indians. The shaman kept on singing. He kept on singing for a long time until *Vanónu's* voice became weaker and weaker and he stopped speaking altogether. When the rain ceased the shaman stopped singing.

Another evil spirit who lives near water and brings storms is *Voropí:*

Voropí is a water spirit. He lives in a tree near the bank of a stream. He is a great serpent with a human face. He does not like human smell and if some person comes near his home he becomes very angry and sends heavy rain, and lightning flashes from his sides. When he is very angry he sends so much rain that people drown. *Voropí* does not like human hair and that is why the Indians in the Chaco pull out their eyebrows, their pubic hair, and why men pull out the hairs on their chins. Bathing in lakes and rivers makes *Voropí* angry.

Hihíaiuné is a female water spirit who lives in the rivers of the Chaco:

Hihíaiuné is a large serpent. She hates menstruating women and people who are mourning for the dead. A menstruating woman must remain indoors and on no account go to a lake or river to wash, for this would anger *Hihíaiuné* who would send the winds *soipoti* and *soiponé* which in turn would bring heavy rains and floods. If a man should have contact with a menstruating woman, he too must avoid water for fear that a flood would destroy his house. To avoid sexual contact menstruating women paint themselves black.

The Terena believed, and still believe, that the affairs of men are directly influenced by spirits, not only by such as *Voropí, Vanónu, and Hihíaiuné* and the ghosts of the dead, but by the souls of living men, animals, plants, and inanimate objects. Sickness, misfortune, and death are caused by spirits and souls of the dead. On the other hand, success in war, hunting, fishing, farming, and love-making can be achieved through the assistance of these spiritual entities. People fear the ghosts of the dead, for they sometimes come back to take a relative or friend to the land of the dead. The ghosts of dead shamans are even more powerful in their influence over human life. The anger of *Voropí, Vanónu,* and *Hihíaiuné* are a threat to life and property. But in addition to these dangers, the souls of people may leave their living bodies or the souls of objects and animals may cause these objects or animals to enter the body, thus bringing about illness or death.

SHAMANISM

Terena shamanism rests on the belief that the world of spirits, ghosts, and souls is open to human

control. This control, however, cannot be exercised by everyone. A long period of training and the knowledge of secret rites is necessary before a person can get into touch with the spirit world. Although many Terena, in the past, practiced sympathetic and contagious magic, it was, however, only the shamans who could operate through the agency of spirits. A properly trained shaman, *koishúmuneti*, would fall into a trance and his soul would visit the ghosts of dead shamans, *Voropí* and *Vanónu*, as well as be in contact with the souls of the living. Every shaman had a special spirit, usually the ghost of a dead shaman, at his service. This ghost would tell the shaman what he wanted to know and would also perform tasks demanded by the shaman. These spirits would appear to the shaman in the form of animals, snakes, or birds while the shaman was in a trance.

To call his special spirit helper a shaman painted his body and face with red and black circles and began to chant and dance. In one hand he held a gourd rattle, *itáaka*, and in the other a bunch of rhea feathers, *kĭ'pahé*. The *kĭ'pahé* looks like a feather duster with the handle cut off very short. When contact with the spirit is made the shaman puts his question or makes his request. The rite varies, of course, with the situation, a curing ceremony being different from one in which a lost object is to be discovered. These performances are customarily carried out at night.

The principal function of the shaman is to cure sickness. The Terena have two theories about illness, one that foreign objects enter the body, and second, that the soul of the sick person leaves the body. Foreign objects may be forced to enter the body either through witchcraft as practiced by some living person or by an evil spirit or ghost. Souls, too, are stolen by spirits and can be removed through witchcraft. The task of the shaman is to remove the injurious object or to return the soul to the body.

During a curing ceremony the patient would lie on the floor of a hut and the shaman would dance slowly around him chanting and shaking his gourd rattle. When the shaman fell into a trance and his spirit helper appeared, the spirit would ask, "Why have you called me?" The shaman would answer, "I have called you to tell me why this person is ill and to tell me how I can cure him."

the following night the novice was expected to have a dream in which the soul of the snake, bird, or plant appeared to him. As we have seen, the souls of these animals, birds, and plants were believed to be the ghosts of dead shamans who appeared in nonhuman forms. If the novice was successful in making contact with a spirit or ghost he would continue his training, for he now had a spirit helper. When the novice had learned all the myths, chants, rites, and magical lore, he was given the gourd rattle, *itáaka*, and was considered a qualified shaman, *koishámaneti*. He was presented to the tribe during the annual festival of the shamans.

Once a year the shamans held a public performance, or festival, known as the *ohéo'koti*. This festival took place when the Pleiades had reached their maximum height in the sky. A month before this date the shamans gathered wild honey and prepared quantities of alcoholic mead in preparation for the ceremony. During this waiting period the shamans chanted together every night and told stories about their *uchépovoi*, or spirit helpers. Often the shamans would fall into a trance and remain as if dead, saying that their *uchépovoi* had called them into the spirit world. Just before the festival the shamans would build a special hut or shrine near the village called *penó-ohéo'koti*.

On the morning of the day fixed for the *ohéo'koti* the shamans would gather at their special hut accompanied by their novices. A fire would be lighted and the shamans would sit around it. One of the shamans, called *ivohákoti* (itchy one), would then stand up and turning toward the graveyard would shout "Wake up!" and call all the known dead by name. Then the shamans would begin to chant and beat their drums and march toward the village. When they entered the village they passed before each house. When they came before the house of a shaman they would stop, and the owner of the house would chant, shaking his gourd rattle, calling on his spirit helper to give him power.

If the shaman were successful or had the skill, he would perform certain miracles before his house to impress the villagers who were gathered around to observe the proceedings. He would make snakes, birds, and other objects come out of his mouth. He would, for instance, take a piece

[Chaco Period]
[Post Chaco Period]

of meat from his mouth, blow on it until it took the form of a snake, later making it disappear into his mouth; or he would take a small plant from his mouth and by blowing on it make it grow into a large flowering plant, later making it diminish and disappear.

This performance of miracles would continue before the house of each shaman. When this part of the *ohéo'koti* was completed the shamans withdrew to appear again dressed in red mantles called *karáramototi*. Again they marched before each house stopping at the houses of the shamans where each shaman would give his colleagues the mead which he had prepared. After all the mead had been consumed the shamans retired and the *ohéo'koti* was finished for the season.

Among the Terena, shamans had, in the past, a position of extraordinary prestige. This high status was due, no doubt, in part to their alleged power to cure, to discover lost objects, to assist in hunting, and to discover the location of enemy war parties, and, in part, to their alleged power to perform miracles. Besides participating intimately in the fundamental activities of social life, the shamans were the repositories and the transmitters of tribal lore and of origin myths and were the connecting link between the Terena and the supernatural world in which everyone believed. Above all, they were instrumental in bringing the people together at the time of the annual *ohéo'koti* during which both the living and the ghosts of the dead participated in observing the power of the shamans to control the world.

PRESENT-DAY RELIGION

Although the Terena have been in contact with a Christian community for over a century and Protestant missionaries have been active in Bananal for about 35 years, shamanism is by no means dead. At Bananal there are, today, six shamans—four men and two women. The four men (Eperú, José, Sabino, and Brigido) were consulted. Eperú for instance, explained that he learned his shamanism from his father who was also a shaman. He said that although he does not have the power to perform miracles, such as making a "bicho" (a little animal) come out of his mouth, he has spirits with whom he can get into contact. These spirits are the ghosts of dead shamans. He calls the spirits at night when he wants them to help him.

[P.45-A]

He calls them by name, shaking his *ïtáaka* and holding his *kï'pahá*. If people are present he makes them close their eyes while he is calling the spirits. *"Giahí kaponé neishá vomorí"* (Come to me, look at me), he says. This request, twice repeated, is enough to make the spirits come to him. He then makes his wishes known to the spirits. When he is in contact with the spirits he claims he is in a trance. During trances Eperú says he sometimes visits the Chaco, the place where *Voropí* lives. He says that shamans who get in contact with *Voropí* are able to control rain. On coming out of the trance he tells people where he has been and with whom he has spoken.

When he is curing, the spirits tells him what to do, how to suck the objects out of the patient's body, or what roots and herbs to use. If a snake has bitten a person, he sucks the wound. He says that when a shaman learns how to cure certain diseases, he does not always have to consult the spirits.

Another shaman, Sabino, is said to be able to perform miracles just like the old Terena shamans. People claim that they have seen Sabino make "bichos" come out of his mouth. One of the female shamans is said to be visited by a jaguar spirit. No one has seen the jaguar spirit but they have heard it speaking with the shaman at night.

In addition to the six shamans just mentioned, there are two Indians, Feliciano and Jàpão, who are said to cure people by blessing them in the Christian fashion. They learned to ask help from the saints when they worked on Brazilian fazendas. These two men, although considered shamans, use Christian saints instead of the ghosts of shamans.

It appears, therefore, that the Terena have adopted Christian beliefs and fitted them into their own pattern of religion. On the other hand, the Brazilians use Terena shamans. Colonel Horta Barbosa, who is in charge of the Indian reservations in this part of Brazil, stated that there are still many active Terena shamans and that one of the female shamans has many Brazilian clients. These "customers" would come long distances to consult her about sickness, lost objects, and matters concerning their personal life. The colonel said that he has no objection to shamanism, but he did object to the Brazilians bringing cane rum to the reservations.

/116 cont./

178 796 Now, in Cachoeirinha, the last time when a complete Oheokoti ceremony was performed was in 1915, judging from the information gathered in the aldea that gives this /117/ [614] date as that of the last Mootó. Since then, the collective [526] Mootó has become an individual affair: when a Xumonó Terena--for example--aware of his skill as a fighter, invited a Sukirikionó to a "fight," and the latter accepted, they were both probably more inclined to revive an ancient source of prestige than to foster a ceremony connected with religious [756] rituals, although secular /in itself/. Today, it can be said, the Oheokoti has been much simplified, in spite of the fact that the term is still in force as a general designation for the magico-religious ceremonies performed by the Koixomuneti.

178 796 756 775 [255] [287] Nevertheless, it is also necessary to differentiate from the usual shamanistic rituals (performed with the sole purpose of healing diseases and warding off evil), those ceremonies directed to the "guardian spirits" of the Koixomuneti. Each Koixomuneti has his Koipihapati-Koixomuneti, i.e., the spirits of dead doctor-sorcerers who, in life, enjoyed great prestige in the community, and, in some cases, got to be teachers of the Koixomuneti, who receives him /sic/ on specific days. (187) It is to these magico-religious ceremonies that the name Oheokoti is given at the present day.

[172]

187. These days may or may not coincide with Holy Week, although Good Friday is the day most fitting for the Oheokoti. Several of the Koixomuneti told us that they "work" on this day, among them the late João Grande, of Cachoeirinha, "Oongó," the aunt of the "Captain" of Bananal, and old Juliana, who lives in

/117 cont./

178
796
756
775
[165]

Campo Grande. All of them were characterized by their great age, especially João Grande, perhaps the oldest of all, who died in 1957 at the age of approximately 100.

that the name Oheokoti is given at the present day.

177 Although these ceremonies still take place in all of the
178 Terêna communities, they seem to have been much modified
755 in their internal structures. They now present intrusive Catholic
756 and spiritualist elements, which make them a living example
771 of religious syncretism: the Koixomuneti call themselves
796 Catholics, wear medals and hang pictures of saints on the walls of their "ranchos," while at the same time their practices show spiritualist influences, due to the contact they maintain with the so-called "low spiritualism" of the cities. It is frequently heard that "spiritualism is getting into the aldea" and that the
[619] present Koixomuneti "are not as good as the old ones." In short, it can be said that in spite of all the modifications undergone by the Oheokoti--or perhaps, due to the same, since they made him more flexible--, he continues to survive and to fulfill his integrating function, or, in other /118/ words, as we already said, to foster tribal solidarity and strengthen the ethnic consciousness of all of the Terêna local groups, succeeding in attracting even the individuals who live in the cities.

178 This flexibility shown by the Oheokoti had no parallel
571 in the traditional social structure. This is the reason why the
[177] latter broke down, without resisting the changes operating in the regional scene, when the Terêna communities were compelled to resist the expanding front of Brazilian society. As we saw in Chapter III--and as we are merely recalling here--, the extraordinary rigidity of Guaná-Terêna social structure, made up of the combination of a three-fold asymmetrical

/39 cont./
time immemorial and are concentrated in village communities, of which there are eleven at present. I have the chief of the village of Mureira, whom the Brazilians call José Correia, to thank for the following information. His Tereno name was at first Kalpetí, which means "left-hander," but it has only the significance of a name, so it was a coincidence when José actually became a left-hander later. An old man who is a close relative of the mother or the father gives the name immediately after the birth. When José's mother died, an old relative of his father gave him a new name: Nakilí. That is, if one of the parents dies, all the children of the family receive different names so that the surviving parent will not be reminded of the past by their previous names and become sad. If the surviving parent dies, the names of his children are not changed again. The names of other persons, for example, of the widower or widow, remain unchanged after a death.

The spouses find each other again after death and then remain together. My informant, who is a widower, says: I still have the hope of meeting my wife in the next world. -- I ask how the next world looks. -- He says: The next world is like here. Formerly the deceased was thrown into the water or, when that was not possible, burned. When one was dead, nothing came out of him; only the intestinal worm came out, if it had been the sickness. In the water the deceased again becomes an animal. He was an animal before he was a Tereno. The burned one also becomes an animal, When the animal dies, it goes on living in the next world. The next world is under the earth. My life never stops completely.

Long before the birth the father and mother do not eat the armadillo, the small ant bear, or the fruit of the araxikũ, because otherwise the child would die in the mother's body and not come out. They practice the same avoidances after birth, too, and lie down in connection with it. The mother lies down for a long time; the father, however, now lies down for only two or three days; formerly it was five days.